The *Final* EDITION

This is the final editorial of *School Management & Leadership*, the magazine I founded back in 2007, which seems a long time ago. I had high hopes once it became established that it would get a life of its own and endure beyond my time (first as its owner and then as its editor) once ownership was transferred to Juta & Company, but that was not to be. Keeping a publication like this alive requires a constant supply of copy – appropriate material that can be used to fill a sufficient number of pages each month to satisfy those who subscribe to and read the magazine. Although there have been several individuals who have contributed single articles over the years the only person to have contributed articles on a regular basis was Erich Cloete, a person whom I have never met but to whom I owe a great debt of gratitude for the material he provided over the past few years. One of the great values of his articles was that they provided a different voice and new perspectives, which are an important element of any publication. In the end, however, the lot of providing sufficient material for every edition fell mostly to me, a task that required me to produce approximately 5 000 words of text each month. It was a task I have mostly enjoyed despite the fact that the more linguistically qualified and capable members of my family held a rather dim view of my language skills and spelling.

Fortunately the advent of computers brought with it such useful devices as spell and language checkers, which were able to address some of the frailties of my writing. The real heroes for writers, however, are people called language editors. These are individuals with eagle eyes and a deep understanding of the vagaries of the English language, who are able to spot and correct language errors of every type and form without disturbing the style and tone of the author. I was fortunate to have had access to two exemplary language editors during the past eight years. The first was my wife, who despite holding down a full-time job as deputy-head at Herschel Girls' School, would always make the time to edit my writing, often doing so in the early hours of the morning. My other language editor was Kathy Sutton, interestingly and coincidentally a former pupil of mine, who took over as editor when the production of SM&L moved to Juta & Company.

There is one other person whom I need to thank for her efforts to keep SM&L alive and that is Lynn Koch, the publisher from Juta & Company who was willing to take on SM&L as a project and to see if she could make it work. She has been of great support in this regard and the fact that SM&L has survived to now owes much to her work behind the scenes.

The real thanks, however, must go to you, our loyal subscribers, particularly those who chose to subscribe in the early days when I was trying to make SM&L a going concern and who have stayed loyal to the title for the entire eight years of its existence. I am truly grateful to you for your support and am only sorry that together we have not been able to create a viable publication to serve the needs and interests of the leaders of South African schools. The need remains, and perhaps some other brave soul or group will take up the challenge of producing a viable publication for this important sector of the market.

In this edition we publish a selection of what we consider to have been some of the most significant articles from past editions of SM&L, drawing particularly from articles that appeared in our earlier editions. We hope you will enjoy the read.

Levels of
LEADERSHIP

Jim Collins, the author of *Good to Great*[1] and co-author of *Built to Last*[2], two excellent books on leadership and management, identifies what he calls Level 5 leadership as a critical component of companies that have been able to sustain outstanding performance over time.

Level 5 leaders sit at the top of a five-level hierarchical model of leadership competencies that he has devised. These leaders possess the skills of all five levels, which are as follows:

- **Level 5:** Executive: Builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical combination of personal humility plus professional will

- **Level 4:** Effective leader: Catalyses commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision, stimulates the group to high performance standards

- **Level 3:** Competent Manager: Organises people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of predetermined objectives

- **Level 2:** Contributing Team Member: Contributes to the achievement of group objectives; works effectively with others in a group setting

- **Level 1:** Highly Capable Individual: Makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills and good work habits.

What is interesting and in many ways runs counter to common perceptions about the attributes of outstanding leaders is his description of the characteristics displayed by these leaders. Collins is particularly dismissive of the value of charisma, maintaining that charismatic leaders tend to have huge egos that they are unable to suppress and as a consequence are more interested in their own achievements than that of their organisation. The best leaders, he maintains, demonstrate two rather different characteristics: deep personal humility and an intense professional will.

These leaders manifest their personal humility by routinely crediting others, external factors and good luck for the success of their companies. When things go badly, however, they blame themselves. They rely on inspiring standards, not their personal charisma, to motivate others. Their steely will relates to their determination to produce outstanding results. They are utterly intolerant of mediocrity and unwavering in their determination to do whatever is necessary to produce outstanding results. They also look to select the best successor they can find because of their resolve to see that their company is even more successful in the future.

In an article published in the *Harvard Business Review*,[3] Collins summarises the characteristics of level five leadership under the heading 'The Yin and Yang of Level 5':

Personal humility
- Demonstrates a compelling modesty, shunning public adulation; never boastful.

- Acts with quiet, calm determination; relies principally on inspired standards, not inspiring charisma, to motivate.

- Channels ambition into company, not self; sets up successors for even more greatness in the next generation.

- Looks in the mirror, not out the window, to apportion responsibility for poor results, never blaming other people, external factors or bad luck.

Professional will
- Creates superb results, a clear catalyst in the transition from good to great.

- Demonstrates an unwavering resolve to do whatever must be done to produce the best long-term results, no matter how difficult.

- Sets the standard of building an enduring great company; will settle for nothing less.

- Looks out the window, not in the mirror, to apportion credit for the success of the company – to other people, external factors and good luck.

It is certainly a refreshing look at leadership principles and should provide anyone who occupies a leadership position with something to reflect on. One could simply dismiss his model as

some new fad from a leadership guru out to make some money, were it not for the fact that the findings are derived from research not on what makes great business leaders but rather on what made great companies.

The companies Collins and his researchers studied were selected not only because they were good companies but because they were good companies that became 'great' in terms of their performance relative to their competitors, for a sustained period of at least 15 years, following a major transition. Collins's research showed that one of the differentiating factors was the leadership qualities of the companies' CEOs and the leadership characteristics that these CEOs had in common and which distinguished them from their peers were the two that he has identified – personal humility and professional will.

In addition to the qualities of their leaders, Collins identified six other key findings that distinguished these companies as the best, as opposed to those that were merely good. The six practices and approaches listed here are those that were common to the 'great' companies and that were identified as being the drivers of their success.

First who

Surprisingly to Collins and his team the good-to-great leaders, as he describes them, started not with vision or strategy but with people. As he puts it "they got the right people on the bus, moved the wrong people off it, ushered the right people into right seats – and then figured out where to drive it". Two things are worth noting here. The first is the emphasis on people and more importantly not just any people. You need to have the people who are right for your organisation. The second is the importance of deploying people appropriately so that there is a good match between their competencies and the job that they are required to do.

Stockdale paradox

Stockdale was an American admiral who survived seven years in a Vietcong POW camp by holding on to two paradoxical beliefs – life could not be worse that it was at the moment, and life would be better in the future. Success derives from an ability to face the truth of your current position no matter how unpleasant or difficult it may appear to be while remaining undaunted in your faith that you will succeed in the end and achieve your goals no matter how distant they may seem. Once again there are good leadership lessons here. As a leader and as an organisation one must not play down

or diminish challenges you face no matter how insurmountable they appear to be. You cannot make them less and in minimising the challenge they pose you undermine your own resolve and the resources you may need to overcome them.

Buildup-breakthrough flywheel

Success, in terms of extraordinary long-term achievement, does not come from a single event or moment of brilliance. Neither does it come from radical change programmes or new fads. Rather it comes from persistent relentless effort in the chosen direction. Collins describes it as like pushing a heavy flywheel on and on in one direction until it finally builds up enough momentum to break free from the restraining forces that have kept it from achieving greatness. It is about hard work, it is about sustained effort over time and it is about a unity of purpose. It doesn't come easy and there are no quick fixes.

The hedgehog concept

This is based on a famous essay by philosopher Isaiah Berlin who describes two approaches to life and thought: one he called the fox approach and the other the hedgehog approach. The fox knows a little about many things and the hedgehog knows only one big thing. The fox is complex and the hedgehog is simple. And according to Collins the hedgehog always wins. It wins he says because of three intersecting circles or concepts: a determination to be the best in one area, an understanding of how its economics works best, and an understanding of what ignites the passion of its people. Anything that does not form part of these circles is eliminated. For schools it is about priorities and focus on the needs of the pupils.

Technology accelerators

Good-to-great companies avoided jumping on the technological bandwagon. Instead they were pioneers in the development and use of carefully selected technologies that were directly linked to their hedgehog concepts. They chose things that helped them deliver their goals, nothing else. Once again there are lessons for schools and principals. Simply having computers and other technology has no value if you are not absolutely clear about the benefits that you will derive from them. If it is not going to produce measurable improvement, what is its value?

A culture of discipline

In their transformation from good-to-great these outstanding companies consistently displayed three forms of discipline: disciplined people, disciplined thought and disciplined action. The

value of discipline of this kind is that where it is present there is no need for hierarchy or bureaucracy or excessive controls all of which stultify initiative, dampen creativity and limit the capacity of people and organisations to be the best that they can be. How good could our schools be if we could achieve just this?

More recently (2006), Collins has published a monograph to accompany *Good to Great* with the title *Why business thinking is not the answer: Good to Great and the Social Sector*[4] in which he explains why he recommends that "we must reject the idea – well-intentioned, but dead wrong – that the primary path to greatness in the social sectors is to become 'more like business'."

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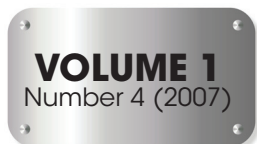
Jim Collins on
LEADERSHIP
in the Social Sector

In our April issue we looked at some of the research findings of Jim Collins and his team on the characteristics of what they call 'good-to-great companies' and their leaders, and which are described in his two books *Good to Great*[1] and *Built to Last*.[2] More recently, Collins has published a monograph with the title *Why Business thinking is not the answer: Good to Great in the Social Sector*[3] in which he looks at successful 'social sector' organisations such as public schools, hospitals, NGOs and aid agencies, and in which he rejects the idea that social sector organisations should become more like business.

Collins suggests that building great organisations proceeds in four phases:

Stage 1: Disciplined people
This is about having the right people doing the right job. It is about leaders who are committed to the organisation or cause and who are committed to employing and/or assigning jobs and tasks to people who will support the organisation's goals and who have the ability and commitment to deliver on these goals. It is also about moving out those whose support is questionable or who are unwilling or unable to deliver.

Stage 2: Disciplined thought
This is about two things:
- a willingness to confront the brutal facts of the organisation's current reality. It is about not shying away from problems that face you but equally it is about having faith that you will ultimately prevail despite the odds that may be stacked against you.

- understanding your strengths, what drives you and what you do best. It includes finding and getting access to the resources that you need without compromising your integrity or your commitment to your goals (what Collins calls the 'hedgehog concept').

Stage 3: Disciplined action
This involves the establishment of a culture of discipline such that those working in the organisation have the freedom to act without the need for hierarchical structures (bosses) because everyone has a clear understanding of their

individual responsibilities and all are committed to the organisation's goals. It is the persistent effort arising from disciplined action that builds the momentum necessary to achieve enduring success (what Collins calls the flywheel effect).

Stage 4: Building greatness to last

The final step requires the organisation's leader(s) to take a long-term view of their organisation – to think about it beyond their tenure so as to ensure that it endures as a great organisation. To do this, leaders need to encourage innovation in terms of processes and strategies to ensure that the organisation stays ahead of its changing operational environment, while preserving the organisation's core values.

What makes Collins's findings so interesting and the message they deliver so powerful is a consequence of the strategy he and his team used to identify and define what he terms' great organisations'. They used a three-stage process to distinguish those organisations that are great from those that are merely good:

- Firstly, they identified the good. They selected from organisations operating in the same business or social environment those that performed best. This was based on objective criteria appropriate for the environment in which the organisations operated. For businesses it was return on investment. For social sector not-for-profit organisations such as schools, aid agencies, hospitals and orchestras it was things like reputation and the ability to attract funds or volunteers. Ultimately for these organisations the measure of quality was performance relative to the organisation's stated mission.

- Secondly, they searched amongst the good to find those that at some point and as a consequence of some purposeful commitment to a desired and ambitious goal, had moved ahead of the rest, outperforming them for a significant period of time (15 years).

- Thirdly, they searched amongst the good organisations operating in the same business or social environment for a similar organisation which for the period under review had faced the same or similar operating environment and challenges, but which had been unable to make the move from good but ordinary, to being a truly great organisation. It is what they discovered in this part of the study that provided the critical material for *Good to Great* and which, it seems from their most recent research, applies equally well in the social sector to organisations such as schools. Of these, perhaps the most significant

for our current situation in this country is that the great organisations were able to prosper despite the challenges and setbacks they faced – setbacks that had derailed, overwhelmed or stunted the progress of their institutional peers.

What differentiated the great organisations and their leaders from their less successful peers was that they did not allow external factors or forces to distract them from their purpose. More importantly they did not blame external factors for their failure to deliver. What they did, which distinguishes them from their more ordinary peers, was to make a plan to manage and overcome the challenges. They were, through foresight, initiative, hard work and commitment to their goals, able to reduce or eliminate the impact of the obstacles and contrary forces thrown up by the environment in which they operated and in some instances were able to use these to improve performance and leverage greater success.

What are the lessons from this for schools and school principals?

1. Have ambition for your school. All the good-to-great organisations and their leaders had ambitious goals. Businesses wanted to be number one in their particular business sector while the social organisations had very clear, specific visions of what they wanted to be. Try to be the best in at least one sphere of schooling, in your circuit, your district, your province or in the country.

2. Let your goals be GOALS not goals. The good-to-great organisations had what Collins called "big hairy audacious goals". They need to be goals that will challenge and excite you and your staff and will make a real difference to the lives of the pupils of your school.

3. The GOALS should drive you and all who work with you and all who are involved in the school. They should be the focus of all that you do and should determine your and your school's priorities.

4. Define your GOALS for the school in ways that everyone can understand. Make them part of everything that you do or say until they become embedded in the fabric of the school to the point where the school and its goals become synonymous.

5. Choose, support and reward teachers and other staff members who share your vision for the school. Be generous with praise and rewards for those whose efforts move the school in the direction of these goals.

6. Be fierce in your resolve. Don't let miscellaneous issues and detractors distract you from your purpose.

7. Have faith that you will prevail. Take a long-term view. Do not let setbacks and obstacles diminish your vision; rather see them as opportunities to hone performance in testing times and to develop new and valuable skills for the future.

8. Do not compromise and accept no excuses. To be great is to be demanding about results. As Collins puts it, "Greatness is not a function of circumstances. Greatness, it turns out, is largely a matter of choice, and discipline." The truth of this is borne out by the achievements of a range of schools across the country, which have produced and continue to produce results that are extraordinary in relation to their circumstances and in comparison to other similar schools with equivalent or even better circumstances. They are proof that principals and teachers can and do make a difference when and if they are willing to do so.

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TIME
MANAGEMENT

How good are you at managing your time and your priorities? Perhaps you are one of those super-organised principals who always meets deadlines, who knows immediately where to find every piece of paper you need, whose in-tray never contains more than two or three items and who is able to spend quality time with your family every evening and over weekends? Or are you, as is the case with many principals, so overwhelmed that you can never find your in-tray because of the clutter on your desk, who goes home each night with a bulging briefcase and box full of files and unopened post to a wife and children whose names you have forgotten? Most principals and people in management positions are somewhere in between these two extremes but if you are more like the latter than the former perhaps it is time to check on how well you manage your time.

The interesting and important thing to remember about time is that everyone has the same numbers of hours in a day and the same number of days in a week. The amount is fixed and it passes by relentlessly. Once time has passed it cannot be called back because you did not use it productively or because you used it for unimportant things rather than those that mattered in your life or in your work. The essential thing to understand is that time management is not about time it is about the management of time, which means making decisions about how you will choose to use the 24 hours allocated to you each day. If you are not coping, or are always behind schedule or feel guilty about the people who are important to you in your life, look to yourself, not to others for solutions. Re-examine three things: your priorities, your decision-making and your self-discipline. Your priorities determine what is important to you in your life and your work. Your decision-making should determine the extent to which the choices you make about how to spend your time reflect your priorities, while your self-discipline determines whether you act on your decisions or pay lip service to them.

Kinds of tasks

Stephen Covey, in his book *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*,[1] identifies four kinds of tasks based on two factors: urgency and importance.

- Urgent items are those that require an immediate response. A good example is a ringing telephone. If not answered within a relatively brief period of time it will stop ringing. The choice we need to make is to answer it or not. Urgent items are not necessarily important but their urgency often drives people to deal with them first, often at the expense of other more important tasks.

- Important items are those that have the potential to yield a high payoff relative to the time invested in them. The high payoff can be of a positive or negative value. Ensuring that the school bus is serviced regularly and its roadworthiness checked is an example of a task that is important because to delay or overlook this task can have potentially catastrophic consequences. Important items are not always urgent and this is often the crux of the problem and the cause of the dilemma faced by principals and others who occupy senior leadership and management positions. For the irate teacher at your door the child who has once again not done his homework is at that moment a matter that is both urgent and important. For the principal, however, the important task may be the preparation of a proposal to a sponsor who may be willing to provide the school with a state-of-the-art computer laboratory worth R1 million.

The four task variables are:

- **Urgent and important** – submitting an advertisement for a teaching post by the due deadline

- **Urgent and unimportant** – the teacher at your door who wants to talk to you about pupils who arrived late for her class

- **Not urgent and important** – checking and updating the contracts and conditions of employment of all SGB employed members of staff to ensure they meet current labour legislation

- **Not urgent and unimportant** – deciding on the venue for the staff end-of-year function.

Clearly the two groups of tasks that managers need to devote their time to are those that are urgent and important and those that are important but not urgent. The thing to avoid is allowing the urgent and unimportant tasks to distract from those that are important but not urgent. This is not always easy because urgency often disguises itself as importance.

Stephanie Winston, in her excellent book, The *Organised Executive: New ways to Manage Time, Paper, and People*[2] provides some useful advice on how busy executive can best manage their time and tasks. The following time-management process is loosely based on her model.

1. In a single notebook (e.g. an A5 stenographer's pad) make a master list of every task, idea or project that you feel you need or would like to tackle. List everything no matter how large or small, important or trivial. Don't worry about the order, list them as they arise.

2. Review this list on a daily basis at the end of each day. Large projects should be broken up into smaller more manageable units. Eliminate (delete) tasks that have been completed, that have been delegated to others or that, on reflection, you feel do not warrant further attention or action.

3. Use your master list to compile a 'To do' list for the next day. The list should not contain more items than you feel you can complete in the day. Use your diary to check the amount of time that you will have available. This will depend on your teaching load for the day and the regular scheduled meetings that you are required to attend during the course of the day. In compiling your list you first need to identify those tasks that are urgent and important – priority items that need to be completed because of looming deadlines or because they may be stressful, such as dealing with a difficult parent or an underperforming member of staff. List these first but try to avoid having more than three items of this nature to deal with on one day. Next list at least one important item that is not urgent. This would typically be an item that forms part of a larger long-term project. Examples could be a review of the school's disciplinary procedures or an analysis of the school's budget as part of a cost-saving drive. Allocating time to items of this kind on a regular basis ensures that they get done and that the process is more thorough than if they were put off until they move from being important but not urgent to important and urgent. Finally add some routine busywork tasks. These are low stress tasks such as filing, sorting incoming mail, signing letters and reading minutes.

4. At the start of the day, read through your daily list and prioritise it in terms of payoff. Start with the item that is priority number 1 and work through it until it is completed then go on to the item that is priority 2. If the items are really urgent and important, instruct your secretary to hold all calls, turn off your cellphone and close your door with instructions that you are to be disturbed only if there is a major crisis. This is not something that I would normally advocate for principals but there are times that this needs to be done if you are to retain your sanity and drive quality in your school.

Time management checklist

1. I have a year plan in my diary listing all the important events of the school year.

2. Dates of special family days such as birthdays and anniversaries are listed in my diary.

3. Meetings of the school's management and governance structures that need to meet on a regular basis are scheduled either a year or a term in advance.

4. At the start of each week I have a clear idea of the meetings/events that I will be required to attend in that week.

5. I seldom miss or need to postpone scheduled meetings.

6. At the start of each week I have a clear idea of my priorities for the week.

7. I seldom miss deadlines for the completion of tasks.

8. I know what my priority tasks are at the start of each day.

9. I allocate time each day for the completion of these priority tasks.

10. I normally complete these priority tasks in the allocated time.

11. I set aside time each day for the completion of routine tasks such as processing incoming mail, and responding to phone calls and emails.

12. I have a system in place to limit or prevent interruptions when this is needed.

13. I seldom procrastinate or put off difficult or dreary tasks.

14. I delegate tasks that subordinates can do whenever possible.

Rate yourself using the following scale:

Just like me = 4
Mostly like me = 3
Sometimes like me = 2
Never like me = 1

If you score:

42–56 you have excellent time management skills and have good control over your organisational and administrative responsibilities.

28–41 you need to tighten up on your time management. You are usually under pressure from deadlines that you struggle to meet. The advice in this article, if acted on, will help you take greater control of your life and improve your productivity.

14–27 you need help as you battle on a daily basis to keep your head above water. Your productivity is low, you often miss deadlines and operate mostly in crisis management mode. Put the advice given in this article into practice to take greater control of your working life and reduce your stress levels as well as the stress levels of your staff.

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MANAGING **MONKEYS**

In writing about monkeys I am not talking about those that climb trees, nor am I talking about those that sit at desks in the classroom or have a lot to say in the staffroom. What I am referring to are the ones that, if you are not careful, get dropped on your desk each day by those who either don't know how to manage them or would prefer you to manage them on their behalf. Monkeys, in management speak, are the problems that other people bring to you and that you then take on rather than insisting that they bring you suggested solutions for follow-up action on their part. Kenneth Blanchard, a prolific writer on management matters and co-author of the One Minute Manager series, provides, with his

co-authors, some sage advice on how to deal with these kinds of monkeys in his book *The One Minute Manager Meets the Monkey.*[1]

Monkey problems are a common failing for new and inexperienced managers, but even people with considerable experience sometimes end up loading themselves with the monkeys of their subordinates. Collecting other people's monkeys is the typical behaviour of inexperienced, enthusiastic and diligent managers. The startling thing about monkey problems is that they are self-inflicted and in dealing with them appropriately you not only help yourself but also help those who bring them to you become better at their jobs.

A typical monkey passing goes as follows. The principal sits in her office or is waylaid by a member of staff in the staffroom or corridor about a problem that he has encountered. The principal considers the problem and then responds with 'Leave it with me' or 'Let me think about it and I'll get back to you'. At the start of the encounter the monkey is firmly sitting on the shoulders of the staff member. During the conversation it hangs from the shoulders of both the staff member and the principal. When they part, the monkey has moved totally to the shoulders of the principal while the staff member walks away relieved and monkey free. What is likely to happen in the days that follow is that the staff member will begin to bug the principal to find out if she has dealt with the problem and may in the end become critical of the principal either because she has taken too long to deal with the problem or because he is dissatisfied with the way in which it has been dealt with. As Blanchard and his co-authors point out, the result of the transaction is that there has been a reversal of roles with the staff member assuming the role of the supervisor and the principal that of the subordinate. This, of course, should not be happening but is a frequent shortcoming of many principals and senior members of staff who occupy management positions.

The important thing to remember in dealing with subordinates with delegated responsibilities is that they be made to understand that they are expected to solve the problems that are associated with the tasks that have been delegated to them. Where they feel unsure about how best to deal with a problem or whether they have the necessary authority to make a certain decision, it is incumbent on them to approach their supervisor for advice, but the advice should be given on proposed solutions not problems. Subordinates who constantly seek advice need also to be reminded that they are

expected to solve their own problems and the fact that they constantly seek advice may indicate a level of incompetence on their part or at least that they do not yet have the competence to deal with the responsibilities that have been delegated to them.

Failure to deal with monkeys leads to at least five kinds of problems for the manager and the organisation:

- Subordinates learn that the manager is a monkey collector so they bring her more monkeys. They deal with fewer and fewer problems themselves, preferring, whenever possible, to pass them on to their supervisor. In the case of schools this is often the principal.

- The manager becomes increasingly loaded with other people's problems and ends up having to work longer and longer hours to deal with these problems.

- The manager loses focus and his/her own areas of responsibility get neglected because of the time and energy that he/she needs to devote to dealing with the problems of other people.

- Responsibility and accountability for the successful completion of tasks becomes confused. Does it belong with the staff member assigned the task or the principal?

- Bottlenecks arise and tasks become stalled as those responsible wait for responses and/or decisions from their overburdened manager.

The result is that staff have less and less to do, the principal works harder and harder but less and less efficiently and everyone blames her for the delays and for their failure to meet deadlines. It is a no-win situation for the principal and, sadly, in her effort to help and support her staff, she has been the cause of her own undoing.

So how does one manage monkeys? Monkeys are best managed by applying a few simple rules to ensure that the right things get done in the right way at the right time by the right people, which of course is exactly what good management is about.

In articulating these rules, Blanchard and his co-authors, clarify their definition of a monkey. A monkey is not the whole problem; it is the first or next step in dealing with the problem. It is the solution to the question 'What must be done next?' and if we are to interpret these as they might apply in the school situation then the first rule is this: the principal

and staff member will not part company until the answer to the question 'What must be done next?' is decided. The answer must be a brief description of what must be done. If the problem or project is a large one it is possible that the original monkey may spawn several smaller monkeys as part of the solution. Each of these must be subject to rule one and to the other rules that follow. If a decision cannot be made in the time that is available then the staff member needs to be sent away to think about it and to come back with a suggestion on what needs to be done – what Blanchard calls 'the next move'. Doing it in this way ensures that the monkey stays with the staff member and not with the principal.

The second rule stipulates that the discussion between the principal and staff members continues until a decision is made about ownership of the monkey or monkeys, if smaller monkeys have been spawned. Assigning ownership is essential because with ownership comes accountability. In assigning ownership the authors make it clear that ownership be assigned to the person who is lowest in the hierarchy of the organisation who is competent to handle the problem. This is an important management concept and one which is not often applied at schools. If a post level one teacher or a secretary or cleaner can do the job, then there is no value in assigning it to a senior member of staff and even less value in the principal handling it. Senior members of staff and principals need to be doing the important and challenging tasks that cannot be done by those below them in the school's hierarchy. If they are to do these jobs to the best of their abilities they need to be relieved of the less important and trivial responsibilities that can be done by others less experienced, less qualified and less 'well paid' than they are.

The third rule is that monkeys need to be insured and that this insurance be taken out before the discussion between the principal and the staff member ends. The 'insurance' in this instance is a mechanism to review decisions before they are made. This is to prevent damage being done by poor or mistaken decisions taken by subordinates. To prevent this, those carrying the monkey must present decisions for action as recommendations, requiring final approval from the principal or their immediate supervisor before implementation. Senior and more experienced members of staff can be given authority to make certain kinds of decision depending on their experience and seniority. In these instances they would simply be required to advise on the decision that has been made so that

their principal and/or supervisor is aware of what has been done.

The fourth and final rule is that monkeys need to be assigned a check-up appointment before the discussion between the principal and staff member ends. The purpose of the check-up is to ensure that the monkey remains healthy and that if it has become unhealthy this is identified in good time so that appropriate remedial action can be taken. The essential purpose of the check-up is to monitor progress and to ensure that the subordinate remains on track. The frequency of this kind of monitoring depends very much on the experience and seniority of the subordinate concerned, and the person's level of expertise in the task or project that has been assigned to them.

In a nutshell, managing monkeys is about good people management principals. It is about the process of delegating tasks in a way that ensure that the person assigned a task is in a position to take full responsibility while providing the person assigning the task with a measure of control over their performance and the quality of the outcome.

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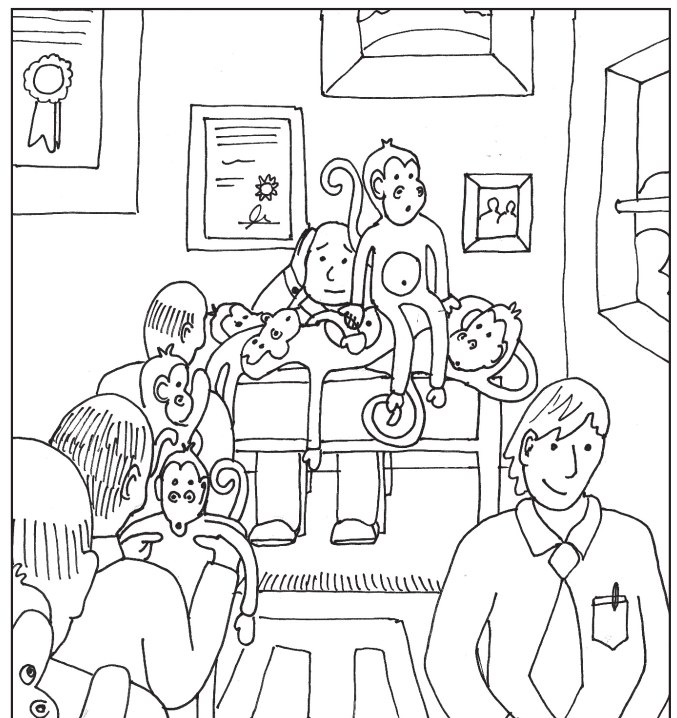
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SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL LEADERSHIP:
Research findings by the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) in the UK

Research into successful school leadership in England conducted by the NCSL[1] and others, including an independent study of school leadership undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC)[2] provides valuable insights into what constitutes effective practice. Interestingly, there is evidence that shows that when compared to other professions, people in wider society in England think that head teachers (principals) provide particularly good examples of leadership. Oefsted, the body charged with the task of evaluating the performance of schools and principals in England, estimates that 80% of school leaders there are doing a 'good', 'very good' or 'excellent' job at leading and managing their schools. The success of principals of English schools can probably, at least partially, be ascribed to the effectiveness of the National College of School Leadership (NCSL).

Leithwood et al[3] make seven strong claims about successful school leadership based on their review of the literature in this field:

- **School leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning.**

Interestingly the influence of classroom teaching and school leadership becomes particularly significant if out-of-school variables such as pupil intake and background factors are controlled. School leadership explains up to 20% of the difference and classroom teaching up to 30% of the difference in pupil learning if these out-of-school factors are controlled. This evidence demonstrates very clearly the burden of responsibility that rests on the shoulders of principals and their management teams and the reason for them to be held accountable for the quality of pupil learning in their schools.

- **Almost all successful leaders draw on the same repertoire of basic leadership practices.**

The basic leadership practices that have been identified are:

- Building vision and setting directions – specific practices include: building a shared vision, fostering the acceptance of groups' goals, demonstrating high performance expectations.

- Understanding and developing people – specific practices include: providing individualised support and consideration, fostering intellectual stimulation, and modelling appropriate values and behaviours. What is important is the way in which the leader integrates the functional (what needs to be done) with the personal (providing support and equipping people with the knowledge and skills they need to do what needs to be done).

- Redesigning the organisation – specific practices include: establishing work conditions which allow teachers to make the most of their motivations, commitments and capacities, building collaborative cultures, restructuring and reculturing the organisation, building productive relations with parents and the community and connecting school to its wider environment.

- Managing the teaching and learning programme – specific practices include: fostering organisational stability, strengthening the schools infrastructure, staffing the teaching programme, providing teaching support, monitoring school activity and buffering staff against distractions from their work.

- **The ways in which leaders apply these basic leadership practices, not the practices themselves, demonstrates responsiveness to, rather than dictation by, the contexts in which they work.**

The important thing that emerges here is the need for principals not only to be sensitive to the size, situation, educational phase and socio-economic context of the school but also to its 'level of performance or success'. The contexts of schools in crises or in the early stages of being 'turned around' differ from a school with a sustained record of good performance. It is the ability to nuance the application of these practices so that they are appropriate for the current status of the school that distinguishes the best leaders.

- **School leaders improve teaching and learning indirectly and most powerfully through their influence on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions.**

The direct contribution that school leaders make to staff capacity in terms of their own curriculum content knowledge is, at the most, modest. Where they do make a difference is in the influence that they have on staff members' motivations, commitments and beliefs about the supportiveness of their working conditions. Recent evidence has shown that teacher's emotions shape their motivations (levels of commitment, sense of efficacy, moral, job satisfaction, stress etc.) which in turn influences pupil learning. Teachers' emotions in turn have been shown to be strongly influence by school leadership practices, particularly in regard to their commitment, resilience and effectiveness. Principals

and other school leaders have a important responsibility in this regard and need to focus their attention on providing a working environment that is supportive of the emotional needs of their staff.

• **School leadership has a greater influence on schools and students when it is widely distributed (shared).**

Distributed leadership includes leadership provided by individual teachers, staff teams, parents, administrative staff, students, members of school management teams, as well as that of the principal. Its influence on pupil performance is significantly greater than that of the principal alone. It is clear from this that pupil performance is enhanced in schools where principals delegate authority in a way that develops the leadership potential of staff and students.

• **Some patterns of (leadership) distribution are more effective than others.**

The research underpinning this claim supports that of the previous claim. Generally the schools with the highest levels of pupil achievement attributed this to high levels of influence from all levels of leadership, although the head was seen to have the greatest influence (both good and bad!). Evidence also suggested that there is no loss of power and influence on the part of principals when the power and influence of others in leadership positions in the school increases. Distributed leadership is also seen to be most effective where leadership practices are co-ordinated.

• **A small handful of personal traits explain a high proportion of the variation in leadership effectiveness.**

The traits identified – mostly from research in the private sector but also from studies of principals' efforts to improve low-performing schools – as having a positive association with leadership effectiveness include:

– being open-minded and ready to learn from others
– being flexible rather than dogmatic in their thinking within a system of core values
– persistence in their determination to achieve their objectives such as greater staff motivation and commitment, and improved learning and pupil achievement
– resilience
– optimism.

These traits also help explain why successful leaders facing challenging conditions continue to push forward when there is little reason to expect progress.

The PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) report, 'Independent study into school leadership',[4] commissioned by the English Department for Education and Skills (DfES), identified the following characteristics of effective leaders based on the expectation of leaders from teachers and support staff.

For teachers, effective leaders:
– Are visible and approachable
– are supportive
– have in-depth knowledge of the school and wider community
– are interested in wider issues rather than just results
– understand classroom practice
– are non-hierarchical and consultative
– distribute leadership effectively
– act and give feedback on concerns raised.

For support staff effective leaders:
– recognise and value the work of others
– communicate fully and effectively with all staff
– define roles and responsibilities
– provide development opportunities
– adopt an open, consultative approach
– have a constructive approach to performance management
– act and give feedback on concerns raised.

These and other research findings from the NCSL provide a great deal of food for thought and much to reflect on for principals and others involved in leadership positions in schools as well as for those who occupy leadership positions in district offices and PEDs and the DoE. The DoE has already shown a degree of intent with the introduction of the ACE programmes but much more needs to be done if principals are to be equipped with the skills and knowledge that they need to do what is required of them. Equally principals need to understand the extent to which they can influence the quality of learning in their schools and be held accountable for it.

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LEADERSHIP LESSONS
from Jake White

In the aftermath of our wonderful victory in the 2007 Rugby World Cup and the euphoria that followed it; I began to reflect on Jake White's leadership qualities and the leadership strategies he used as he developed his cup-winning team. How well do Jake White and his successful Springbok team match the profile of the good-to-great companies that Jim Collins identifies in his book *Good to Great*[1]?

Firstly, is Jake a level 5 leader in terms of the criteria that Collins uses to define Level 5 leadership? Collins identifies two key paradoxical attributes of level 5 leaders:

• Personal modesty
Level 5 leaders are typically modest, they avoid personal adulation and are not boastful about their achievements. As leaders, they rely more on quiet determination and inspiring standards than charisma to motivate people. They measure their success by the achievements of the organisation they lead rather than by their own achievements and they establish a platform that will promote the future success of the organisation after they have departed. Level 5 leaders take personal responsibility for poor results and never blame others or external factors for under-performance.

• Professional will
Level 5 leaders are characterised by their ability to produce superb results and can be identified as catalysts in turning good organisations into great organisations. More than anything else, they are unwavering in their determination to do what needs to be done to produce the best long-term results and to ensure that the organisation they lead endures and remains world class for its type. They prefer to give credit to others for the organisation's success rather than claiming it for themselves.

There are those who may suggest that Jake White enjoys the limelight and courts controversy but I am not convinced that this is true. In many occasions when he has featured in the news during his nearly four years as Springbok coach it has been for reasons of controversy. By and large, however, these controversies have not been of his making and have had to do with issues relating to the transformation of rugby rather than to his coaching duties. He is certainly not a charismatic leader, rather he has inspired his team through his long-term vision of what he believed could be achieved. An example of this is the story of how the squad that he gathered together initially nearly four years ago smiled

nervously and rather sheepishly when he suggested that they were the nucleus of the team that would win the World Cup in 2007. Yet it was this vision that was to sustain him and the team through the many difficult challenges that they faced in the years that followed. He certainly showed a great deal of professional will and an unwavering determination to do what needed to be done to achieve that goal. He knew which players he wanted, including his captain, and backed his decisions and his players through thick and thin. He had a clear idea of the levels of fitness and skill that he required of each player and set about putting in place the structures and programmes that were needed to achieve these. When South Africa lost 16–32 to England in their 2004 tour to the UK, he is famously quoted as saying, "It looked like men against boys at times." By the time the World Cup arrived Jake's boys had grown up as the English found to their cost.

Collins identifies six strategies used by leaders to deliver greatness:

• First who
The first thing that good-to-great leaders do is to get the right people on the bus, move the wrong people off the bus and make sure that they have got the right people in the right seats. They then decide where they were going.

From the start of his appointment as Bok coach Jake was quite clear whom he wanted in his team. There was a core group of players with whom he had worked when he coached the U21 side that won the U21 World Cup in 2002. This group included John Smit, whom he immediately appointed captain despite the fact that many pundits suggested that there were better hookers in the country. He fetched Os du Randt out of retirement, and brought Percy Montgomery and Joost van der Westhuizen home from the overseas clubs they had joined, as he began to build the foundations of his fledgling team. Over the next four years the players who constituted the squad became increasingly stable. Unlike some of his predecessors he did not simply replace players when they had an off period or when they were injured, even for quite prolonged stretches of time. Think of people like Ashwin Willemse, Schalk Burger, Jean de Villiers and André Pretorius.

• Stockdale paradox
The Stockdale paradox is about having the ability to confront the brutal facts about your current reality while maintaining absolute faith that you will prevail

in the end. Jake had to do this often enough during his period as coach. One needs only to think about the Luke Watson affair, the threat to cancel the team's passports by Butana Komphela, and the insistence that he accept Zola Yeye as team manager although Yeye was not his first choice for the job, the guffaw of derision when he brought Montgomery back, his decision to rest the majority of his core players for the away leg of the 2007 Tri-Nations competition, and the constant spats with the unstable and strife-ridden General Council of SARU. It is to his great credit and a measure of his leadership ability that through this entire period he remained committed to his dream of world-cup glory.

• **Buildup-breakthrough flywheel**

The buildup-breakthrough flywheel is about relentlessly pursuing your purpose. It is about driving in one direction, building up momentum until you reach a breakthrough point and emerge with a level of energy and performance that is beyond what others have been able to achieve.

After the initial excitement in Jakes' first year as coach, when the Springboks won the 2004 Tri-Nations competition, there was a flat period. Everyone expected the Springboks to beat all opposition (they always do). It was in this period that Jake's selection policy was most tested, yet he stuck to his guns. This was when the momentum first began to build within the squad and also when many of the other unseen structures began to be put in place and their efforts consolidated. All the while the momentum was building. The first signs of the impending breakthrough came with the start of the 2007 Super 14 when, for the first time, the South African teams began to look like they could reach the final and even win the competition. By the time the World Cup started South Africa was beginning to be seen as the only team that could have a serious chance of taming the rampant All Blacks. Then as the World Cup proceeded it became increasingly apparent that the momentum was with South Africa.

• **The Hedgehog concept**

According to a parable by philosopher and scholar Isaiah Berlin there are two approaches to life. There are foxes that are complex and know a little about many things and there are hedgehogs that are simple and know a lot about one thing. Successful organisations are like hedgehogs, with a simple understanding about three important things: what the organisation can be best in the world at; how the organisation works best; and what ignites the passion of its people. What else can you say? He got it right for each of the three focus areas.

• **Technology accelerators**

Good-to-great organisations look at new and innovative ways of using technology to enhance performance. One thing stands out here, the use of 'visual awareness specialist' Dr Sherylle Calder.

It is her work, apparently, that helped players like Bryan Habana and Robert du Preez see gaps and steal intercepts that lead to tries. Can we count the appointment of Eddy Jones as a technological innovation?

• **A culture of discipline**

These best organisations consistently demonstrate discipline in three areas: disciplined people, disciplined thought and disciplined action. Establishing this level of discipline provides the space for individuals to flourish and demonstrate their creative flair without the need for excessive controls. Can you remember there was a time when the yellow carding of players like Schalk Burger and Butch James was a regular feature of their play and when Springboks lost games through penalties conceded as a result of ill-discipline on defence in their own half? It did not happen in the 2007 World Cup. Our defence was impeccable, not only because it was so tight, but because it was so disciplined.
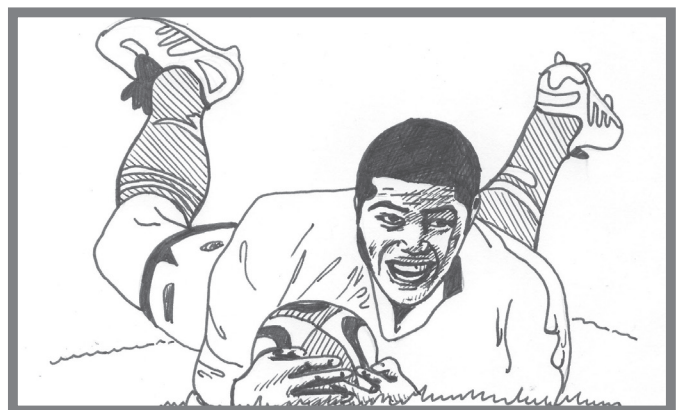
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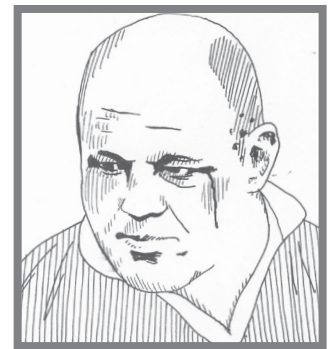
Os du Randt
(Jake White 2007 8)

Brian Habana (Jake White 2007 8)

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MANAGEMENT
by Walking About (MBWA)

For those not initiated in the ways of 'management speak', management by walking about (or MBWA as it is more commonly called) may seem a rather bizarre management concept and certainly not one that many regard as one of the key elements in good management. Yet for most good managers and good principals, it is an important part of their daily routine.

At its simplest level, MBWA is about the manager getting out of his or her office and walking about the organisation as a means of getting to know first-hand what is actually going on. It usually goes together with an open-door policy because both MBWA and an open-door policy are approaches to management that are aimed at bringing a manager closer to the employees who fall under his area of supervision. For the head of an organisation, it is about bringing him closer to all employees, not just those who are members of his senior management team. When a head has an open-door policy, it implies that any member of staff is welcome any time her door is open to come in for informal discussion of any issue related to her work.

The main purpose of MBWA and of an open-door policy is to bring the manager or head closer to the people who are doing the work. It is a management model that seeks to avoid the problems that are normally associated with strongly hierarchical management structures. The concept seems to have originated as part of the management strategies developed by Edward Deming, an American management expert who worked closely with Japanese business and manufacturing organisations, particularly Toyota, and who is considered to be the founder of the Total Quality Movement (TQM) and of Lean Manufacturing. It has now become an element in the management strategies of top business leaders across the world and has been found to be particularly helpful when organisations are faced with change and uncertainty. This is because MBWA makes the organisation's managers and leaders more visible and available to the staff and customers of the organisation. Because of their greater availability, the leaders can dispel rumours and provide greater clarity of the organisation's new vision and strategies.

For a principal of a school, MBWA means getting out of your office on a regular basis (at least once a day) and walking through the school to see how things are going. It is about having informal discussion with teachers, cleaners, pupils and parents as you wend your way through the school and, most of all, it is about learning first-hand what really goes on in your school. Initially, if you or your predecessor did not practise MBWA, there may be a degree of suspicion about your purpose. People will think that you are checking up on them or even spying on them. Of course in some ways you are. People should come to school with a purpose: to teach and to learn or to create and maintain the kind of environment that promotes teaching and learning. If this is not what they are doing, then it is important that you know and understand why this is so. The purpose of MBWA is, however, not to catch them doing what they should not be doing but rather to discover what they are doing that is good and to learn from them about the obstacles that prevent them from performing to the best of their ability those tasks that have been entrusted to them. Therefore it is important to be open and empathetic when engaging those you meet and talk to. Remember the idea is to gather information, to understand how systems work in practice and who is doing the work that matters. Your purpose is not inspection and it is not to criticise and correct. It is also important to cover all areas of the school and all times of the working day: the last thing you want to happen is that your staff perceive you to have favourites or that you attend and support certain functions and/or activities more than others.

Initially, you may find that staff members are a little anxious when you approach them in your rounds but that will soon disappear if you approach them in the way that we have suggested. The benefits will come when they discover that not only are you listening to them but that you are willing to intervene on their behalf and to support their constructive suggestions about things that can be done to improve their effectiveness. Your senior management team is the one group of individuals that may find your decision to manage by walking about a little disconcerting. Their concerns will relate to their fear that you may be muscling in on their turf and, in doing so, perhaps undermining their authority. To

an extent these fears are justified but that must not prevent you from the responsibility that you have to learn first-hand how your school is functioning. What you must avoid, however, is bypassing them in making decisions about things that formally fall under their areas of responsibility. The best way to avoid this problem is to make sure that you engage them in the same sort of information discussions in your walking about as you would any other member of staff. Encourage them to be open about any management and leadership problems that they may be experiencing, share what you have learned in your wanderings with them and remember that you have a responsibility to grow them as managers and leaders. Encourage them to do as you do and to spend some of their management time walking about.

There is one other person who may have a problem with your decision to include MBWA as part of your management strategy and that is your secretary. Most good secretaries and PAs believe that bosses should stay in their offices so that they can mother and control them. They want you to be there to deal with phone calls and mail and all the other menial chores that are the nightmare of many heads. And if you are good and do as you are told they will bring you coffee and even an occasional slice of cake when it is a staff member's birthday. If this is the situation, and all else fails, complain of a sore back from all the sitting and explain that you have been told that a brisk walk is the best thing for it!

MBWA is not a fad or an excuse not to do the paperwork that is the inevitable lot of any principal or manager. It is a management strategy that has been around for a long time and one that continues to be part of the daily routine of good managers everywhere. Do it properly and with purpose and you will not only learn more about your school than you could have learned in any other way, you will also improve communication within the school, increase the morale and motivation of your staff, earn their greater loyalty and respect and even improve your physical and mental health. Try it, it works!

MBWA guidelines

- Appear relaxed as you make your rounds. Staff and pupils will respond positively and are likely to reflect your feelings and actions.

- Walk alone – staff and pupils are unlikely to be relaxed and good humoured if confronted by the principal with a posse of deputies.

- Remain open and responsive to questions and concerns.

- Observe and listen so that staff, pupils and parents understand that you are interested in their views.

- Be good humoured – laughter breaks down barriers and eases stress.

- Have fun and enjoy the process.

- Use what you have learned to engage staff and pupils in discussion about their particular interests and achievements, including those that are not related to the school.

- Invite suggestions about things that can be done to improve the operations and activities of the school.

- Don't bypass subject heads, HoDs and deputies when responding to staff members' queries that relate to these people's areas of responsibility. Rather encourage the staff member to take his or her concerns to the person concerned.

- Plan to spend similar amounts of time in all areas of the school and with all organisational groupings within the school.

- Try to catch people doing things that are right and then make a special effort to laud their good work or constructive proposal publicly.

- Behave like a coach training a team rather than like an inspector seeking compliance with policy.

- Encourage staff and pupils to show you their best efforts.

- Spread good news stories and special achievements.

- Share your dreams. Everyone likes to dream and the staff are more likely to support you and work to help you achieve your dreams for the school if they know what they are.

MANAGEMENT
MEETINGS

Most people in leadership positions in education, and in other sectors of the economy for that matter, spend a considerable period of their working life in meetings. Given that those in leadership positions within organisations should be the most knowledgeable, experienced and expert employees (and because of this often the most highly paid), one would expect that any business that is conducted at meetings they attend pertains to matters of great importance to the organisation. Sadly, this is seldom the case and in many instances matters of little relevance or value to the organisation take up most time at meetings. It is this writer's experience that this is often particularly true of staff and parent meetings at schools and of meetings called by departmental officials.

Meetings do, however, serve a very important purpose and few organisations can function effectively without them. The trick, for organisational efficiency, is to ensure that every meeting called has a clear purpose and that the organisation, structure and processes of the meeting are conducted in such a way that the meeting achieves its purpose in the shortest possible time.

The following guidelines are designed to help those who must host, chair or attend meetings to ensure that the meeting process is efficient and effective.

1. Decide on the purpose of the meeting.
Most meetings have one or more of the following functions:
• to make decisions
• to inform
• to solve problems
• to persuade
• to socialise.
The purpose of the meeting should be clearly stated when the notice of the meeting is sent out to those who are invited or are required to attend.

2. Decide who should attend the meeting.
In some instances, such as meetings of the staff, SMT or SGB, this will be obvious. In other instances, decisions about who should attend may require careful thought. The decision may even require a meeting of its own; but beware of the potential consequences of this – meetings have the ugly habit of spawning other meetings.

3. Decide on an agenda.
Under normal circumstances, everyone invited to participate in the meeting should have the right to add items to the agenda – provided these are related to the purpose of the meeting. When discussing a matter of great importance or of great complexity, it is sometimes useful to limit the agenda to just a single item. As an example, a school governing body may decide to limit the discussion at one of its meetings to the school budget and the school fees for the following year.

Good meeting procedure requires that the name or initials of the proposer of each agenda item be placed next to the item. It is also good practice to distribute the agenda with the notice of meeting.

4. Decide on the date and time of the meeting and inform participants by means of a notice of meeting.
For groups that meet on a regular basis, such as SGBs and SMTs, it is best to establish the most suitable time for these meetings at the start of the year or term and then to stick to these times. This helps make planning easier for all involved. For the same reason, it is also a good idea to fix the ending time or the duration of the meeting. Another equally important reason for fixing the ending times of meetings is that it helps participants focus on what needs to be achieved in the time available.

The notice of meeting should include the following information:

• the time, date and venue of the meeting

• a list of participants or representative organisations for meetings (where this is defined). This would obviously not be necessary for open parent meetings or staff meetings and other meetings of this nature.

• the purpose of the meeting and/or agenda

• an invitation to participants to add items to the agenda if the hosting group/chairperson is willing to permit this and the deadline for these additions. It is common practice to allow urgent additional agenda items to be added at the start of the meeting.

• any information and/or documents that participants may need to consult or become

familiar with in order to participate meaningfully in the meeting.

5.Meeting procedure

Every meeting should have a chairperson and a secretary. For most organisations or functioning groups, the persons responsible for these functions will be either elected office bearers or their attendance will be determined by their positions within the organisation. As an example, one would expect the principal to chair meetings of the SMT and the subject head to chair subject meetings. In both of these cases, however, the function of secretary may be allocated on a rotational basis. In the case of SGBs, the chairperson and secretary are elected on an annual basis by the members of SGB.

Function of the chairperson

It is the duty of the chairperson to ensure that the meeting is conducted according to agreed procedure. This meeting procedure would normally be set out in the constitution of the body or agreement would be reached at the start of the meeting on the procedure that is to be followed. For internal groups within the school, it may not be necessary to have a formally agreed procedure. Alternatively, the school may choose to draft a common meeting procedure policy for all school-based meetings. The chairperson would also normally:

- prepare the agenda with the assistance of the secretary
- ensure that the meeting starts promptly at the stipulated time. (Avoid delaying the start of the meeting for latecomers – it is unfair to those who are punctual and encourages those who are late to continue with their bad habits.)
- ensure that all cellphones are turned off at the start of the meeting
- prioritise the agenda items, if necessary, with the agreement of the participants and make sure that each item is dealt with appropriately and expeditiously. (This is where a good chairperson can make a difference. It is the chairperson's responsibility to ensure that speakers stick to the matter under discussion and do not get side-tracked by other related issues.)
- ensure that the discussion is not dominated by one or two insistent members and that the same points are not made repeatedly. (The chairperson is within his/her rights to limit the number of times a person may speak on an issue if this helps the meeting deal with an item or reach a decision.)
- decide when the matter needs to be taken to a vote if the meeting procedure requires items to

be voted on. (The chairperson should also ensure that all members who are eligible to vote on an issue are quite clear about the issue that is being voted on, as well as the possible consequences of the decision.)

- remind participants of the date and time of the next meeting if this has been set

- thank participants and close the meeting at the agreed ending time.

Functions of the secretary

A meeting secretary is normally responsible for the following matters:
- preparation of the agenda (with the chairperson)
- ensuring that the meeting venue is available and is suitable for the meeting
- distributing the notice of meeting and agenda to the committee members or to parties who have been invited to the meeting
- writing and distributing the minutes.

Responsibilities of participants

All participants involved in any meeting, with the exception perhaps of political meetings, have a responsibility to ensure that the meeting achieves its agreed purpose. This does not mean that debate should not be robust. It does, however, mean that every participant conduct him- or herself in a way that is constructive and that any decisions that are made are made on the basis of the thoughtful input of all participants. Participants can assist in this by:
- being punctual
- actively participating in the discussion
- arriving at the meeting fully prepared. (This includes checking the agenda and reading all documents and reports attached to the agenda before they arrive at the meeting.)

Most meetings conducted at schools involve groups of staff members and it is good school practice for the school to prepare a simple policy document and guidelines for meeting procedure. Such a document should include the following:
- when meetings may or may not be held
- venues for meetings
- an annual and/or quarterly programme for giving the dates and times of all meetings that all or specified staff members are expected to attend
- the notice period (number of days in advance) for calling meetings. (This may vary, depending on who – or which groups – will be involved and whether or not the principal needs to be informed of the meeting and whether or not he/she should receive copies of the agenda in cases where he/

she is not automatically expected to attend.)
- the format of the minutes that should be taken and whether or not copies of the minutes should be forwarded to the principal for information purposes. (In most cases, it is expedient for minutes simply to take the format of a record of any decisions that are taken, together with the names of those who are responsible for acting on those decisions.)

By modelling good meeting protocol in the meetings that they chair and by insisting that all meetings within the school operate according to school policy guidelines, principals and others in leadership positions can significantly improve the effective management of their schools. Equally important is the fact that good meeting procedure will save them and their staff considerable time – a much valued commodity for all involved in busy and successful schools.
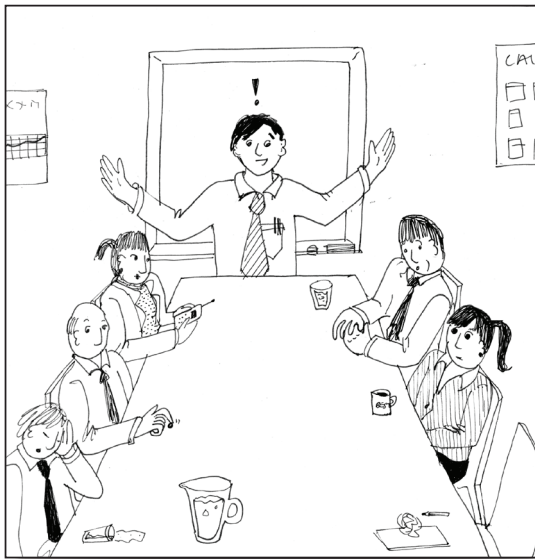
LESS FOX and *MORE* HEDGEHOG
is what we need

I was recently re-reading parts of Jim Collins's *Good to Great*[1] as I gathered ideas for a presentation. In it he mentions the writings of Isaiah Berlin, a British philosopher and political theorist, and a book he wrote on Tolstoy[2]. Berlin classifies people into two types: hedgehogs and foxes. Hedgehogs are people whose lives are the embodiment of one central vision. They seek to see the whole as a single integrated system. Foxes, on the other hand, are people who live their lives pursuing many divergent ends and show little desire to bring these together to form a coherent whole.

Collins suggests that the CEOs of the 'good-to-great' companies – and the companies themselves – are

hedgehog types. They identify one single simple idea and focus all their energies on making it work. The CEOs of the less successful companies tend to be constantly chasing after the latest trends or re-inventing themselves in new guises.

This set me thinking about our own education system and how fox-like it has become over the past 15 years. Think of it – there have been rationalisation, restructuring (ad nauseum), OBE, NCS, CASS, CATs, CTAs, RNCS, pupils to learners, teachers to educators, work schedules, work schemes, learning outcomes, learning areas, learning fields, learning programmes, learning phases, GET and FET bands, NQF, SC, FETC, NSC, assessment standards,

subject statements, inclusive education, barriers to learning, NSB, credits, fundamental learning component, core learning component, elective learning component, rating codes, notional time, IQMS, OSD ... it's a never-ending list. In order to help teachers understand these, there have been endless workshops, often conducted by people with little experience of running schools or the practicalities of managing classrooms frequently filled to overflowing with children who have a self-centred view of their human rights. Therefore it is not surprising that, despite the noble intentions of the policymakers and curriculum 'specialists', systems failure has become the norm in many educational districts and schools.

What our education system desperately needs at the moment is a lot more hedgehog and a lot less fox. I am not suggesting that the present curriculum be abandoned or changed again – that would be a fox-like response and one that has become the typical response of politically-driven policy reform across the world.

Ample evidence of the repeated failure of policy and funding reform to improve pupil outcomes is provided in the McKinsey and Company report, 'How the world's best-performing school systems come out on top',[3] which we have reported on in this publication in the past. If the quality of our schooling system is to improve, the kind of hedgehog concept that we need is something simple that focuses on the two things that make a difference: well-managed schools and well-taught classes. As Jim Collins and the authors of the McKinsey report point out, however, this means getting the right people to do the job. Collins talks about getting the right people on the bus, the wrong people off the bus and the right people in the right seats. The McKinsey report notes that three things matter most in the top school systems:

- getting the right people to become teachers
- developing them into effective instructors
- ensuring that the system is able to deliver the best possible instruction to every child.

Elsewhere they comment that developing effective instructional leaders in schools means doing three things:

- getting the right teachers to become principals
- developing their instructional leadership skills
- focusing each principal's time on instructional leadership.

Research evidence of what constitutes good teaching in terms of pupil outcomes yields a similar simple message. It is about engagement between the teacher and the pupils of the class. Successful teachers have the ability to get all members of the class to engage with the matter under discussion. It is their ability to stimulate the interest of the pupils and their skill at posing questions that elicit reflection and encourage thoughtful responses that are the basis of real learning.

In a study in which Kaplan and Owings reviewed the research findings linking teacher quality to pupil achievement, they distinguished between teacher quality and teaching quality. Teacher quality concerns the inputs that the teacher brings to the school. These include their 'demographic' profile, aptitude, professional preparation, qualifications and prior professional work experience. Teaching quality, on the other hand, refers to the teacher's ability to teach – what the teacher does to promote pupil learning inside the classroom. Kaplan and Owings list the following factors that relate teaching quality to increased pupil achievement:

- verbal ability (of the teacher)
- content knowledge
- education coursework on teaching methods in their discipline – that is the extent of their training in their subject specialities
- their performance in state licensing examinations that measure both basic skills and teaching knowledge. In the USA, where this study was based, teachers are required to 'pass' a licensing examination before they may teach in the state's public schools (this would be equivalent to the SACE-approved teaching qualification and SACE registration that is a requirement for teachers who wish to teach in South African schools).
- ongoing professional learning
- flexibility, creativity and adaptability
- the amount of teaching experience (once a teacher has taught for three or more years the difference associated with experience is marginal)
- demonstrated skill in asking pupils higher-order questions and probing their responses
- Class size, planning time, opportunities to work with colleagues and curricular resources.

There is nothing here about the kind of bureaucratic, prescriptive and assessment-focused approach that is so often demanded by subject advisors – an approach driven by the mistaken assumption that changing the way pupils are assessed will improve 'teaching quality'.

The HSRC report on the supply and demand of teachers identifies this as a problem and notes: "With regard to the new curriculum it is important that the DoE improve training and practicals on OBE to relieve the stress associated with the curriculum and reduce the paperwork burden as well as administrative tasks and other activities that increase educator workload."[4]

The paperwork and administrative demands of the new curriculum are a typically foxy response to the challenges that our education system faces.

Elsewhere in the HSRC report the authors note that some teachers spend as little as 10% of their allocated teaching time engaged in instructional practice, i.e. actually teaching. It goes on to say: "Finally, it was clear from discussion with teachers, and from observation, that the amount of paperwork and administration is onerous. Much of the paperwork that teachers are required to do is designed to ensure that teaching and assessment occurs regularly, including requiring that teachers indicate the completion of certain assessment standards, the specification of which outcomes have been addressed, and the detailed recording of marks. Ironically, it is precisely this policy which attempts to guarantee that instruction and assessment takes place that serves to undermine instructional time. This happens particularly when teachers use class time to complete administrative tasks."[5]

It is clear from this that in many schools, teachers spend their time processing the administrative paperwork demanded by departmental officials, instead of using their time preparing lessons, teaching and assessing the work of the pupils they teach in the most appropriate and efficient way. As the authors of the HSRC report point out, the recording and reporting processes required of teachers are hindering rather than promoting good teaching. The foxiness of this reporting model is matched only by the single-minded hedgehog-like zeal of subject advisors, who seem determined to ensure that every teacher in every school meets every assessment prescription to the letter. These additional demands on teachers' time are demotivating for the best and most committed teachers, while incompetent and uncommitted teachers use these demands as excuses for not fulfilling their classroom obligations.

Sadly, the problem is generally worst in schools attended by pupils most in need of committed and skilled teachers. The McKinsey & Company report makes it clear that one of the reasons that the best-performing education systems are successful is that they put in place strategies to support the underperforming pupils early in their school careers. If the HSRC report correctly reflects what is happening in South Africa, the reverse is probably true here.

What is most needed by our education system at the moment is a hedgehog-like, single-minded drive to improve teaching quality – that thing that happens in the classroom between the teacher and the pupils in the class. Teaching quality does not just happen; it is learned through classroom observation – both observing and being observed, through practice in a range of classroom situations, through experience and through formal and informal collaboration with colleagues. There is very little focus on these kinds of activities by departmental officials or by the principals and management teams of many schools, yet it is these kinds of activities that are shown to be most effective at improving teaching quality. Perhaps it is time for those in leadership positions in schools to take a stand on this and to become very hedgehog-like in their insistence that teaching quality and not paperwork is the primary focus of their schools. Below we offer some suggestions on strategies that can be employed to promote teacher quality and on how principals can use their hedgehog prickles to protect their staff from the unreasonable administrative demands of fox-like officials.

HEDGEHOG STRATEGIES for principals

- **Protect instructional time.**
Make it school policy not to allow any activity to interfere with instructional time during the formal school day.
Protest – preferably in writing – when departmental officials schedule workshops during the formal school day and refuse to allow your teachers to attend.
Insist that teachers arrive at school at least 10 minutes before the start of the school day and remain at school until at least 15 minutes after the end of the formal school day.
Insist that teachers are in class for the full duration of every lesson.
Schedule staff and other meetings outside of

the formal school day. Remember that teachers must account for at least 1 800 hours of work each year. In a 200-day school year, if they are at school for the required minimum seven hours every school day, they will have accounted for just 1 400 of those hours.

• **Encourage discussion about teaching quality.**

Take a lead in this regard by talking about issues of teaching quality in staff meetings and one-on-one discussions with teachers. Make teaching quality a regular item on the agenda of staff meetings, meetings of subject/phase/learning area heads and meetings of the SMT.

Establish an area of the staffroom notice board that is devoted to material related to teaching quality.

• **Make time for staff professional development.**

Time for staff professional development should be built into your school year plan. Establish a staff professional development team under your leadership or that of a senior member of staff and make him/her responsible for planning and organising the programme.

• **Make teaching quality the focus of all professional development activities.**

If you do not take personal responsibility for the programme, insist that the majority of professional development activities are directly related to quality of teaching.

• **Promote classroom observation.**

Classroom observation allows teachers to learn from one another and it is one of the most successful ways of sharing good practice. This kind of classroom observation should not be part of any evaluative process. Principals can encourage the process by inviting teachers to observe their classes. SMT members and subject heads can do the same. Encourage members of staff to discuss what they have learned at staff meetings and professional development workshops.

• **Provide teachers with professional resources.**

Set aside funds in the school budget for the purchase of professional resources (such as journals) for teachers. There is a wide range of teaching-related resource materials that can be accessed and downloaded free of charge from the internet.

• **Be visible in your school (MBWA).**

Management by Walking About, which we featured in Volume 2 No. 1 of 2008, is a good way to find out which teachers are teaching well and which need help and support. As the principal, it is essential that you have a good idea of what is happening in the classrooms of your school. You are ultimately responsible for the quality of teaching in your school. This is not something that can be monitored from the confines of your office.

• **Celebrate teaching of high quality.**

Regular observation and discussion on teaching will quickly reveal who are the school's most talented, innovative and effective teachers. Publicly acknowledge their special skill and improve their status by inviting them to take responsibility for supporting and mentoring new and beginner teachers.

• **Share ideas and learn from others.**

Encourage and make time for your teachers to meet teachers from other schools and – where possible – to observe them teach. This is especially important for those teachers on your staff who are the sole teachers of specific subjects. As the principal, you should also make every effort to share ideas with the principals of other schools about the things that can be done to improve the quality of teaching.

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VOLUME 2
Number 3 (2008)

HIGH COURT

supports discretionary powers of principals in dealing with disciplinary issues

In a judgement handed down in the High Court in 2008 Acting-Justice PC van der Byl confirmed that principals have discretionary powers when dealing with the misconduct of pupils. These discretionary powers give them the right to decide whether or not a pupil should be brought before a disciplinary hearing of the SGB to face a charge of 'serious misconduct'.

The case involved the kind of incident that most principals of high schools will have dealt with on a number of occasions. The incident in question involved two senior pupils who were caught cheating in an examination at the end of their Grade 11 year. The two were questioned about the incident and although initially denying that they had been dishonest, finally admitted that they had cheated and/or planned to cheat in the examination. The matter was partly complicated by the fact that the two pupils had recently been appointed as prefects and one as a hostel prefect for their Grade 12 year. The principal decided that part of the sanction for their dishonesty would involve the loss of their prefectships. His decision was based on the fact that cheating in an examination was seen as being "contrary to the high moral standards expected from a prefect". This decision with reasons was communicated to both sets of parents in writing by the principal.

During their Grade 12 year the parents of one of the two boys challenged in the High Court the principal's decision to demote their son. This challenge was based on two grounds:
- that the boy had been prejudiced and would continue to suffer prejudice from having not having been made a prefect
- that the transgression was an example of 'serious misconduct' as defined by the SASA and should have been investigated as such and referred to the SGB for a formal disciplinary hearing. It was further argued that by not dealing with the matter in this way the principal had denied his son the right to 'fair administrative justice'.

The relief they sought was that their son be reinstated as a school prefect.

Of additional interest to school managers is the fact that during the course of the court case the pupil in question turned 18 and he himself became the plaintiff in terms of the new age of majority that applied in South Africa from 1 July 2007.

In deciding against the plaintiff, Acting-Justice van der Byl made some important points that are relevant to principals and to SGBs. The most significant of these are listed below:

- ### The procedural fairness of the action of the principal
The court ruled, quoting existing case law, that "where a matter is left to the discretion or determination of a public officer, and where his discretion has been bona fide exercised or his judgement bona fide expressed, the Court will not interfere with the result. … and if he has duly and honestly applied himself to the question which has been left to his discretion, it is impossible for a Court of Law either to make him change his mind or to substitute its conclusion for his own … There are circumstances in which interference would be possible and right. If for instance such an officer had acted mala fide or from ulterior and improper motives, if he had not applied his mind to the matter or exercised his discretion at all, or if he had disregarded the express provisions of a statute – in such cases the court might grant relief. But it would be unable to interfere with the due and honest exercise of discretion, even if it considered the decision inequitable or wrong".

In simple terms, when a principal exercises his or her discretionary powers, provided these are exercised without malice (mala fide) or from ulterior and improper motives, that decision cannot legally be overturned even if the decision can be shown to be inequitable or wrong.

This is an important legal principle that has significant implications for principals who, in terms of SASA and the DoE policy guidelines for dealing with disciplinary matters, are given powers of discretion, particularly in regard to whether or not to initiate a formal disciplinary hearing.

• **Prejudice suffered by the pupil**

In his judgement the judge pointed out that the fact that one of the two pupils had been appointed first team rugby captain and the other vice-captain of the first hockey team was clear evidence that the boy's loss of prefectship had not "severely tainted his good name and reputation in the eyes of the teaching staff, his peers and their parents" as was alleged. He also made the point that since they were no longer pupils at the school it was in any event not possible for them to be reinstated as prefects.

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GOOD LEADERS
build better teams for best schools

Evidence from research from both within education and in the wider business sector shows that a team-based approach to leadership has many advantages over the more traditional hierarchical model with all authority vested in a powerful chief executive.

Although we have no hard evidence to prove it, it is our experience that the daily operations of most of the better performing schools in this country are managed by a wide range of individuals and teams, each of which has significant authority and decision-making power for those functions that have been delegated to them. These will include subject heads and their subject teams, phase and grade heads working with members of their phase teams or class teachers, together with individuals and groups responsible for aspects such as school finance, physical amenities, pupil discipline and the school's co-curricular programme. The presence of these well-functioning teams is almost always a sign that the head of the school is confident of his/her authority and has a good understanding of his/her own strengths and weaknesses as a leader. Conversely, in schools where these management structures are absent or perform poorly, you are likely to find a head who is unsure of his/her authority, and/or who lacks confidence, or is simply incompetent or disinterested in achieving what is best for his/her school.

Building effective management teams and developing efficient accountable management structures is perhaps the most important work of any principal. This is because it is through these people and structures that she/he can best extend her/his influence and vision for the school and grow the leadership and management expertise of her/his staff.

Interestingly, the author of a recent report[1] published by the National College of School Leadership (NCSL) notes that despite the prevalence of leadership teams across schools in England, "very little has been written about them". He contrasts this with the substantial literature on school leadership that focuses mainly on the role of the principal and with the massive body of published work devoted to leadership, management and teamwork outside of education, much of which has at least some relevance for schools.

The research on which the report is based was undertaken in 2008 in six secondary schools in England, which had been identified by school inspectors as having outstanding leadership and management, with a particular emphasis on a strong leadership team. Both state and independent schools were included in the group and the schools varied in size (in terms of pupil enrolment) between 621 and 1 742 pupils.

David Thomas, the author of the report, compiled a list[2] of the characteristics of effective leadership teams based on his review of the literature. Our 'Effective leadership team checklist' is largely based on this list and other material and sources derived from the report. Based on his review of the literature, he identified six conditions that need to be met for leadership teams to be effective. The six conditions are:
• an appropriate team structure
• a clear and compelling purpose
• able and competent members
• clear operating rules
• strong team leadership
• regular self-evaluation.

1. Appropriate team structure
For the leadership team to work together effectively, it is important that the management responsibilities of each member of the team are clearly defined and that these management responsibilities cover all of the critical operational areas of the school. Ideally, teams should consist of between five and eight members, irrespective of the size of the school. This is because larger groups tend to become unwieldy and smaller groups are unlikely to be able to be assigned responsibility for all of the critical

operational areas of the school. It is worth noting that this kind of a model is not based on a specific number of allocated promotion posts but rather on the major areas of responsibility that need to be covered.

2. A clear and compelling purpose
The principal, as team leader, has two critical responsibilities:
- She/he must articulate the purpose of the team, constantly reminding team members of the need to focus their efforts on those priorities that will contribute most to the achievement of their long-term vision for the school.
- She/he must ensure that individual team members have clearly defined tasks and that they understand the extent to which the overall success of the team depends on their personal contribution and best efforts.

3. Able and competent members
While the SMTs of most public schools are traditionally constituted from teachers who hold promotion posts, this is not necessarily the best way to constitute management teams if it is to be effective. As suggested in item 1, the team ideally needs to include all those members of staff who have been delegated with responsibility for one or more of the major operational areas of the school. If some of these tasks have been assigned to teachers who do not hold promotion posts, then it would be best, in terms of the overall effectiveness of the team, if these individuals were included as team members. The opposite is also true: there is little value in inviting a teacher to become part of the team simply because he or she holds a promotion post if she/he is not also assigned responsibility for one or more core functions. Some of the information gleaned from research findings on team effectiveness suggests that 'team-working skills' – the ability of an individual to work as part of a team – may contribute more to team success than the experience or knowledge of individual team members.

Some of the most influential findings on team effectiveness are derived from research undertaken by Dr Meredith Belbin.[3] Belbin suggests that for teams to operate effectively, they need to include individuals with complementary personalities, as well as with a varied array of knowledge, skills and expertise. He identified and defined nine different specific team-working roles which he considered were necessary for teams to function effectively. These are listed, together with a brief descriptor of each.

4. Clear operating rules
All teams work more effectively when team members understand and accept the basic tenets within which the team operates. These include issues such as confidentiality, how conflict will be dealt with and the need to place the best interests of the team and the school ahead of personal preferences and

ambitions. At a more basic level, teams also need to be quite clear about such matters as meeting times and punctuality, meeting agendas and the kinds of minutes that are kept – for instance, will minutes simply record decisions that are taken or will they also reflect the discussion and how the decisions were reached? Perhaps most important of all are the related issues of integrity and trust. For a team to work effectively, individual members must believe that they can trust one another to act with integrity in all of their dealings. If this trust is lacking, members are unlikely to speak openly and share their perspectives with the other members of the team. Without this trust, meetings quickly degenerate into political events driven by self-interest, point-scoring and rhetoric rather than seeking to achieve consensus about what is best for the school. It is the duty of the principal, as leader of the group, to ensure that this does not happen and the best way to achieve this is through the example set in the chairing of the meetings and in the day-to-day dealings of the principal with the members of the team.

Leadership team effectiveness checklist
- Team members work well together.
- Team members have a range of strengths in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- The roles and responsibilities of individual team members are clear to staff.
- Team members fulfil their individual management responsibilities and are willing to be held accountable for their actions.
- Team members communicate a clear and coherent vision for the school.
- Team members share a common set of principles and values and operate in accordance with these principles and values.
- The leadership team consults widely before making key policy decisions.
- Where there are differences of opinion these are dealt with in an open and constructive manner with team members focusing on achieving consensus on solutions that are in the best interests of the school.
- Team members take joint ownership of all decisions once made.
- Team members are proactive and are adept at anticipating future developments and their implications for the school and in doing so avoid crisis management.
- The leadership team sets out the broad strategy for change and then encourages and supports teachers in a way that allows them to adapt and develop their own appropriate professional responses to anticipated/proposed changes.
- When introducing change the leadership team identifies priorities and phases in

new developments, allowing time for consolidation.

- The leadership team maintains an intense focus on teaching and learning and stays abreast of the latest development in pedagogy.
- The leadership team evaluates all potential new initiatives in terms of their likely impact on pupil achievement; and the evaluation process considers the broader implications of any initiative and not just on results.
- Members of the leadership team are highly visible and approachable and model desired behaviours and attributes such as hard work, commitment, mutual respect, teamwork, loyalty, openness, honesty and integrity.
- Team members develop positive relationships with other stakeholders in the school community and are good at managing people and at encouraging others to develop their talents and to contribute their energy and skills for the good of the school.
- Team members have good communication skills and work to recognise, support and commend the work of others.
- Team members set high standards and have high expectations that staff will meet these standards while remaining sensitive to issues such as staff mood, morale and workload.
- Team members acknowledge that they are accountable to others for their performance and provide clear evidence of the results and consequences of their decisions.
- Team members readily admit to their mistakes and are willing to consider alternatives.
- Team members have an in-depth knowledge of the school and of the wider community that it serves.
- Team members work to build effective relationships with other schools and community-based organisations.
- Team members participate in training on how to function effectively as a team and spend time reflecting on their performance and in developing their individual and team skills.

Defining SMT Team purpose – some examples

- To improve the operational effectiveness of the school's management systems.
- To manage and monitor the quality of teacher and learning at classroom level.
- To manage and monitor curriculum

coverage, teaching quality and pupil performance in Mathematics throughout the school.

- To improve literacy and numeracy levels of pupils as measured by Grade 3 and Grade 6 systemic evaluation assessments.
- To improve/increase the percentage of pupils who pass Grade 12 with Bachelor's level pass.
- To manage and monitor the use of the school's Learning and Teaching Support Materials, including the school's textbook stock and to ensure that teachers make greater use of the available resources in their teaching.
- To use funds allocated in the school's budget for the purchase of those Learning and Teaching Support Materials which are most likely to improve the literacy and numeracy levels of pupils in Grades 8 and 9, and to manage and monitor their use by teachers.

5. Strong team leadership

As we have indicated in the previous section, members of the team are likely to take their cue and model their behaviour on that of the team leader. It is also important to emphasise that choosing a team-based approach is not an indication of weak leadership; rather, the opposite is true. This is because it is far easier to challenge a leader's views from within the team than when she/he stands apart at the apex of the pyramid of a traditional hierarchical management model.

The team leader's most important role lies in setting the tone and establishing an environment that encourages and promotes team work. The team leader's other tasks include delegating tasks and allocating areas of responsibility, setting standards and establishing levels of accountability, and laying the ground rules for meetings.

One of the measures of the commitment of the principal to a team-based approach is the willingness to accept that his/her view will not always prevail and that there will be times when she/he needs to accept team-based decisions that are contrary to his/her inclination on a matter. She/he also needs to accept that despite his or her contrary opinion, she/he has an obligation to support the decision and remains accountable for any adverse consequences that may arise from it. A principal's willingness to act in this way sends a strong message to the other members of the team that she/he has trust in them and values their opinion.

6. Regular self-evaluation

Teams, like individuals, need to learn from their experiences and regular reflection not only on

successes and failures but also on their own internal dynamics and team-learning through reflection and self-evaluation is another characteristic of effective teams. Those who have undertaken studies of teams outside of education consider self-evaluation to be an important element in the successful working of teams and it is something that school-based leadership teams could learn from.

David Thomas, the author of the report,[4] found that most of the six 'conditions for effective leadership teams' that he had identified were present in the leadership teams of the six successful schools that he used for his study, with two of the schools demonstrating all six of the conditions.

Part of the purpose of reports of this kind commissioned by the NCSL is to gather and collate information about best practice so that this can be disseminated to other schools and where necessary incorporated into the leadership development programmes that the NCSL provides to school leaders. This report makes a number of recommendations, which include the following:

- that the building and development of leadership teams becomes a core part of appropriate NCSL programmes
- that 'inspection' frameworks focus more on team leadership and less on the individual principal
- that the National Standards for School Leadership include an emphasis on the development of strong and effective leadership teams. The National Standards of School Leadership are a set of standards that have been developed by the Department of Education in England and that aspiring principals are required to meet before they can be considered for appointment to the position of principal.

Included with the recommendations is a list of questions the author compiled to assist principals in the team self-evaluation process. The questions are:

- What is the purpose of my leadership team?
- Why do I need the team to carry out this purpose?
- Do I have the best people available to me on my team?
- If not, how can I restructure my team to include them?
- How can I ensure a balance of team-working skills within my team?
- Have I agreed with the team a clear set of operating principles to ensure effective team-working?
- What do I need to do to lead them effectively?
- How do I know how well we are doing? What process do we use for self evaluation?

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VOLUME 5
Number 5 (2011)

TEACHING AND LEARNING
in the Foundation Phase

In 2010 the Western Cape Education Department (WCED), with financial support from the provincial treasury, invited a research team from the University of Stellenbosch to undertake a large-scale study into the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Phase in provincial public schools. The study included 135 days of classroom observation as well as interviews with Foundation Phase teachers and primary school principals.

Under the heading 'General findings' the study listed a number of factors which, when acting in combination, contributed to poor results. These factors include:

- Learners are not taught sufficient work (not all of the curriculum is covered) and the work that is taught is not taught in sufficient depth.

- The standard and cognitive demand of the work that is taught is too low.

- Insufficient emphasis is placed on ensuring that learners have a proper and thorough understanding of the fundamentals of language and of numeracy.

- Insufficient time is devoted to reading, writing and calculating on a daily basis.

The study goes on to list 10 'positive practices', each of which includes suggestions on how these can be further improved, and 27 practices that the study was critical of, listed under nine headings. We have used these findings to compile the list of 'good practice', which we have set out below.

Recommendations for good practice in the Foundation Phase.

1. A mat or carpet should be provided for all classrooms in the Foundation Phase (FP). The mat should be used as a meeting place for learners and their teacher for 'story time', for shared reading experiences and also for one-on-one discussion between the teacher and individual learners.

A mat or carpet should be provided for use as a meeting place for teachers and their learners.

2. Learners should use separate writing books for each subject and for different sections of language.

3. Classrooms should be print-rich with up-to-date resources that should be replaced regularly. This is especially important for Afrikaans and the African languages.

Classrooms should be print rich.

4. Appropriate age-level book collections should be available in all classrooms. Teachers need to foster an interest in books as sources of information and the book collections should therefore include books that provide information for learners with text and pictures that are age-appropriate.

5. Teachers need to check and correct learner's Home Language work more regularly. Learning can also be reinforced by getting learners to check and correct their own work and that of their class peers.
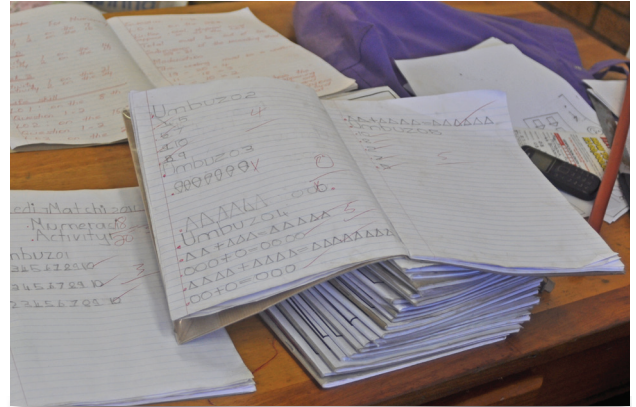
Teachers need to check learners' work more regularly.

6. Principals, heads of department and members of the school's Senior Management Team (SMT) need to devote more attention to monitoring classroom practice and to ensuring that reading, writing and numeracy activities take place every day and that these activities are grade-appropriate and sufficiently demanding.

7. The principal and members of the school's SMT must monitor learner progress relative to the prescriptions of the curriculum and benchmark learner performance against results achieved in compulsory systemic testing such as the Annual National Assessment (ANA).

8. Learner attendance should be closely monitored and regular absences on Mondays and Fridays should be investigated and action taken where this is required.

9. Teachers should encourage learner-to-learner interaction and should include working with learner error as part of their teaching strategies.

10. Teachers should ensure that all learners are given opportunities to answer questions and to solve problems individually. This should include working on the chalkboard and explaining their answers.

11. Teacher who teach large classes need to be provided with more support and guidance, in terms of appropriate teaching strategies, by members of the SMT.

12. Teaching time needs to be used more efficiently and productively. This can be achieved by ensuring that there are set times each day for core teaching and learning activities, particularly those devoted to literacy and numeracy.

13. Principals must ensure that teaching time is not disrupted by activities that are not curriculum

related. Examples of these include administrative work, staff meetings and parent visits. Principals must continuously monitor the productive use of teaching time and classroom level.

14. The pace at which work is covered should be carefully monitored to ensure that the full curriculum is covered each year and the core curriculum is covered in sufficient depth.

15. Textbooks and learner workbooks (those that learners write in) should be used every day.

Textbooks and learner workbooks should be used every day.

16. Appropriate homework should be regularly set. Homework should be designed to give learners the opportunity to practise at home what they have learned in class each day.

17. The textbooks and workbooks that learners use must include graded activities and exercises so that it is possible to monitor learner progress and performance gains.

18. Teachers should ensure that they challenge learners constantly by providing them with increasingly complex and demanding tasks.

19. Teachers need to be more demanding in terms of the quantity of work that is covered each day and should insist that learners complete reading, writing and numeracy tasks even if this means their having to complete them after school or at home as part of their homework.

20. No Foundation Phase class should include more than 40 learners and principals and SMT members must allocate staff in a way that makes this possible.

21. Textbooks and workbooks are preferable to worksheets because they provide activities and exercises in a sequential and graded manner. They are also simpler for learners to manage because they are bound.

22. Learners should be exposed to books as often as possible and where this is feasible should be provided with books such as readers that they can take home on loan from the school.

23. Every learner should be given the opportunity to read to the teacher individually so that the teacher can monitor their reading progress and differentiate between the reading levels of different learners within the class.

Every learner should be given the opportunity to read to the teacher individually.

24. Teachers need to approach the teaching of phonics, syntax, grammar and spelling in a more structured and systematic way.

25. Learners need to be set tasks that require them to read, search and find answers in extended pieces of text.

26. Learners should be given regular practice in reading expository texts and in searching for information in the text. This kind of reading should form part of learning activities in subjects such as Life Skills and Mathematics.

27. Sufficient classroom time should be devoted to the practising of basic mental arithmetic skills and to learning multiplication tables and this helps children to develop their ability to compute quickly and accurately.

28. Lesson time should be set aside for individual work so that learners get practise in working on their own at solving problems. This practise will help them develop and practise the skills that they need when writing tests and examinations.

Lesson time should be set aside for individual work so that learners can practise the skills that they need when writing tests and examinations.

29. Encourage parents and other members of the learners' families to become more fully involved in the development of their literacy and numeracy skills. Provide assistance and advice where necessary to parents and family members on the kinds of things that they can do to support their children's language and numeracy development.

30. Test learners regularly and systematically to determine their performance as individuals and as a group. Use this data to manage and monitor learner performance levels and progress in terms of curriculum coverage.

31. Help learners to develop their conceptual language skills so that they are able to understand the meanings of terms such as 'add', 'subtract', 'multiply' and 'divide', which have special subject-related meanings. The proper understanding of these technical terms is essential if learners are to make good progress in the Intermediate Phase.

32. Principals need to provide teachers with guidance on when, how and where to use the bilingual approach in the Foundation Phase. Specific times should be set aside in the Foundation Phase for the teaching of English First Additional Language or the LoLT of the Intermediate Phase if this is not English and where this is different from the mother tongue of learners.